BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a removable walking sole for shoes and in particular athletic shoes.

Many sports require specialized footwear to be worn by the participants on the playing surface where the sport takes place. Some sports, such as curling or bowling, require a smooth-soled shoe designed specifically for sliding on the playing surface. Other sports, such as golf or soccer, require a shoe with cleats to give the wearer added stability or traction on the playing surface.

In some of these sports, the wearing of the specialized footwear is often restricted to the playing surface and other footwear, such as street shoes, is prohibited from being worn on the playing surface. This necessitates the need for the wearer to have an additional pair of shoes when stepping onto or off of the playing surface.

In curling, for example, only curling shoes are allowed on the curling rink surface and wearing the curling shoes off the rink into the clubhouse area is usually prohibited to prevent the tracking of dirt and debris back on to the rink's surface. This requires the curler to constantly change footwear when stepping onto or off of the curling rink ice surface.

Similarly, in golf, the wearing of cleated golf shoes i.e. shoes with cleats into the clubhouse is often prohibited to prevent cleats from damaging floor surfaces inside the clubhouse. This requires golfers to either carry an extra pair of shoes without cleats if they wish to enter the clubhouse before or after their round of golf or

to return to their vehicle and change their shoes in the parking lot. This can be a time-consuming, awkward, frustrating and inconvenient experience for golfers.

DISCUSSION OF THE PRIOR ART

US Patent No. 5,070,631 issued on December 10, 1991 discloses a cleat cover specifically for golf shoes with metal spikes. As metal spikes are no longer allowed on most golf courses, the cleat cover does not address its use with the newer soft spikes that are now in use on golf shoes. In addition, this cover does not teach a solution for smooth-soled athletic shoes. This patent does not teach the concept of converting an athletic shoe into a walking shoe.

US Patent No. 5,548,910, issued August 26, 1996 describes a spike guard specifically for golf shoes that is secured to the shoe by toe and heel covers. The elastomeric body of the spike guard includes a plurality of elastomeric projections extending upwardly from the body. The disadvantages of the guard are that the projections are unstable when the guard is used with metal spikes, and the guard cannot be used to convert an athletic shoe into a walking shoe.

The present invention addresses the shortcomings of the prior art and provides a simplified solution for converting an athletic shoe into a walking shoe that eliminates the need for the wearer to carry a second pair of shoes when stepping onto or off of a sport playing surface, or, alternatively, eliminates the need for the wearer to have or carry a second pair of shoes when he/she leaves home, intending to go to a location where appropriate athletic shoes would need to be worn, such as golfing and curling.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a removable walking sole that can be easily slipped onto and off of an athletic shoe. The walking sole consists of an outer sole made of a resilient material that is suitable for the sole of a walking shoe. The outer sole preferably has a tread on the bottom surface to provide traction for the wearer.

The outer sole is preferably made of a resilient material and is of sufficient thickness to provide comfort to the wearer when the walking sole is attached to the athletic shoe. Preferably, the outer sole includes two layers, which are formed into a unitary piece using techniques that are common in the art in the manufacturing of athletic shoes.

The first layer is a bottom layer made of hard-wearing material, such as rubber, that is durable, flexible and suitable for the tread of an athletic shoe. The second layer is an upper layer, positioned above the bottom layer, that is preferably a resilient material, such as foam rubber, that can absorb the indentation caused by a cleat, and provide cushioning characteristics that further provide comfort to the wearer when walking, as well as providing better traction and grip when wearing smooth-soled shoes.

The upper layer obviates the need for a separate insole in the walking sole. The use of an insole in the walking sole, in fact, is not recommended, because cleated athletic shoes will tend to tear the insole and to pull the insole out of the walking sole after repeated insertion and removal of the cleated shoe.

The bottom layer of the outer sole can be made of rubber, while the upper layer of the outer sole can be made from foam rubber or a combination of foam

rubber and rubber. They can also be made from a composite of materials as are commonly used in the manufacture of athletic shoes.

The type and quality of materials used for the outer sole are chosen so as to provide a walking sole that is comfortable to wear yet remains lightweight and easy to fold, store away and transport or carry until it is required.

Attached to the perimeter of the outer sole is an elastic upper that secures the outer sole to a shoe. The upper stretches to conform to the lower exterior portion of the shoe. The upper is preferably made of a stretchable material, such as spandex, that provides a snug fit between the outer sole and the shoe but still allows for easy insertion and removal of the shoe from the walking sole. The upper is preferably sewn and/or glued to the outer sole.

In practice, slipping the walking sole onto an athletic shoe converts the athletic shoe into a walking shoe thereby permitting the wearer to walk on surfaces away from the sport playing surface. In doing so, the wearer eliminates the need for carrying an extra pair of walking shoes and also prevents the soles of the athletic shoes from becoming contaminated with dirt and debris which may not be permitted on the playing surface, and also serves to protect the walking surface from damage caused by the athletic shoe. When the wearer returns to the playing surface, the walking soles are simply removed from the athletic shoes and put away until they are needed again.

An object of the present invention is to provide removable walking soles for smooth-soled and cleated athletic shoes which are easy to slip onto and off of athletic shoes.

Another object of the present invention is to provide for a means for removing or eliminating the need to carry a second pair of shoes from home to a location where the wearer of athletic shoes will be required.

Another object of the invention is to provide removable walking soles for athletic shoes which are lightweight and comfortable to wear.

A further object of the present invention is to provide removable walking soles for athletic shoes which are flexible, and easy to fold, store and transport.

Broadly stated, the present invention is a removable walking sole for a shoe comprising an outer sole corresponding generally to the sole of a shoe to provide traction for the wearer, and an elasticized upper for securing the outer sole to the lower exterior portion of a shoe.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a sole in accordance with the present invention as seen from one side and above;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the sole of Fig. 1 as seen from the bottom and one side;

Figure 3 is a cross section taken generally along line 3-3 of Fig. 2; and

Figure 4 is a perspective view of the sole of Figs. 1 to 3 on an athletic shoe.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The present invention is concerned with a removable walking sole that can be easily slipped onto and off of an athletic shoe. Referring to Figures 1, 2 and 3, the walking sole indicated generally at 10 consists of an outer sole 12, made of a resilient material that is suitable for the sole of a walking shoe, and an elastic upper 14 that secures the outer sole to an athletic shoe 22 (Fig. 4). A loop 16 is attached

at the heel of the walking sole 10. The loop 16 is made from a durable material such as fabric or leather and aids the wearer in slipping on and removing the walking sole 10 from the athletic shoe 22.

Referring to Figure 3, the outer sole 12 includes a bottom layer 18, and an upper layer 20 positioned above the bottom layer 18. The bottom layer 18 and the upper layer 20 are formed as one piece during manufacture to create the outer sole 12. The bottom layer 18 is preferably made from durable and flexible rubber, and includes a tread design 24 to provide traction for the wearer.

The upper layer 20 is made from a durable and flexible material, such as foam rubber, which is sufficiently resilient to absorb indentations caused by cleats (not shown) on the bottom of the athletic shoe 22, but still returns substantially to its original form and shape when the walking sole 10 is removed from the athletic shoe 22. The upper layer 20 is preferably shaped to conform to the bottom of the athletic shoe 22 and provides cushioning for the wearer. The upper layer 20 also prevents the athletic shoe from slipping inside the walking sole 10.

The upper 14 is formed of a stretchable material, such as spandex. In the preferred embodiment, the upper 14 is glued to the outer sole 12 but could be attached by stitching the upper 14 and the outer sole 12 together, or by a combination of the two methods. The upper 14 is capable of stretching to the shape of the athletic shoe 22 and providing a snug fit between the walking sole 10 and the athletic shoe 22. The upper 14 is shaped to cover the heel, sides and toe of the upper of the athletic shoe 22, but still allows the walking sole 10 to be easily slipped onto and removed from the athletic shoe 22.

The walking sole 10 is preferably shaped to conform to the shape of the athletic shoe 22 and to cover the entire bottom of the athletic shoe 22. This prevents the athletic shoe 22 from slipping out of the walking sole 10 and creates a snug fit between the two. It is contemplated that the walking sole 10 may be manufactured in a range of standard shoe sizes as a universal walking sole capable of being fitted to any brand, model and size of athletic shoe 22. It is also contemplated that the walking sole 10 may be manufactured to custom fit a specific brand, model and size of athletic shoe 22.

While the present invention is intended for use with smooth-soled and cleated athletic shoes, it is also contemplated that the present invention may also be used with non-athletic shoes, such as dress shoes or dance shoes, to convert them into comfortable walking shoes and to prevent the soles from becoming soiled with dirt and debris.

The terms and expressions in the preceding specification have been used therein as terms of description and not of limitation, and there is no intention in the use of such terms and expressions of excluding equivalents of the features shown and described or portions thereof, it being recognized that the scope of the invention is defined and limited only by the claims that follow.